

• 482



Fig. 1. En Route in the Bush and Savanna of the Lukenie.

000

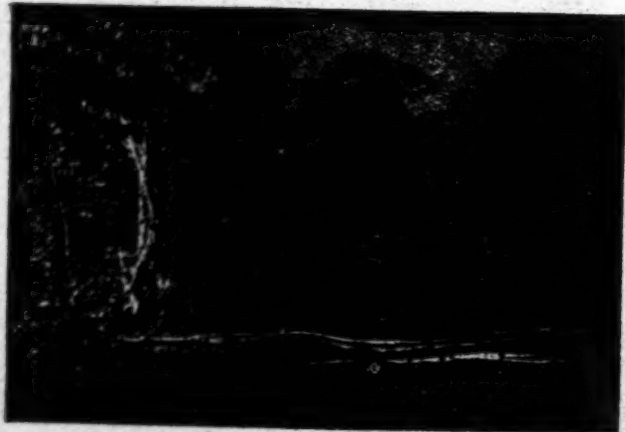


Fig. 2. In the Equatorial Forest.

Yaelima

764 At the village of Tik-ke-Tik in Yaelima territory, we witnessed a similar scene following the death of a young man.

At nightfall his body was wrapped in mats or rattan splints, solidly plaited, tied up, and completely sealed. At dawn the mortuary bundle, attached to a strong branch, was lifted by two men. Instead of taking the village lane, they carried the corpse behind the hut and then through the bush. A few men walking Indian file made up the procession, at the end of which was the



Fig. 12. Mother and Child, Bankutshu Tribe.

mother of the deceased in mourning costume. The path they followed was quite irregular. Largely avoiding the trodden paths, the bearers often retraced their steps and took almost two hours to reach the cemetery, four kilometers from the village.

764 On the way back, the natives explained to me that the numerous turns and the walk through untrodden bush were meant to lead astray the evil spirit who had entered the village and killed the

262 The natives are familiar with two kinds of manioc, sweet and bitter.

Sweet manioc is not highly valued, owing to its insipid taste and the poor consistency of the chikwangu made from it.

252 Aside from the soaking, which is done only for bitter manioc, chikwangu is prepared in the same way whether the flour comes from sweet or bitter manioc.

[462] The first harvest of manioc tubers takes place eight to ten months after planting. The natives, however, do not begin harvesting them in earnest until the second year. Only the woman does this work.

● [482] The manioc tubers are piled in large baskets carried on the back and taken to the soaking well, a pond of putrid, dirty, muddy water giving off a highly unpleasant odor of putrefaction and fermentation, which is reserved for this task.

262
462 The manioc roots remain submerged from five to eight days to make them ferment and thus eliminate their bitter taste. At the end of this period the woman returns to the pond, tucks up her primitive loincloth as high as possible and enters the swamp. She sinks in up to her knees, and plunging her hands and arms into the mire, she pulls out the roots one by one and throws them on the bank. When her supply seems sufficient, she piles the roots in her basket and goes to wash them in the river. Returning to the village, she cuts the tubers, lets them dry a little in the sun, and then peels them. The Bakete, Banfumungu, and all the tribes of the Fimi-Lake Leopold II-Lukenie region, up to the boundaries of Bobaie and Balesa territory, chop the pieces of manioc root before reducing them to flour, while the Ipanga, Batitu, Yaelima and Bokala crush them between the fingers before throwing them between the fingers before throwing them in the mortar.

472 The chikwangu knife has a double-edged blade, a median rib, and a long, relatively broad oval form. It is pointed at both ends. One of these ends is [120] embedded in a wooden handle with a doubly concave vertical section.

The museum [Ed., Museum of the Belgian Congo] now has only two of these knives, but they are found in every native hut in the Kasai-Fimi-Lukenie region up to the Oshwe sector. It is, however, almost impossible to buy them from the natives. A woman, unable to do without her chikwangu knife a single day

276 According to native belief, the kola nut ensures the fertility
842 of a woman if sexual relations take place the night after the man
has used this stimulant.

276 The regular use of kola induces very intense nervous excite-
ment. We noticed that the adolescents and men in their prime
scarcely use it. Only the old people use it regularly. Kakua,
the old native chief, chewed it from morning to night. One day I
pointed this out to him, asking if he were not afraid of the danger-
ous effects of this overindulgence. He proudly pointed out to me
the huts of his seven wives, saying, "Ask them if they don't have
children!"

276 Among the stimulants we may also mention the peanut,
263 widely used by all the tribes, a type of small ground pea, and
278 certain tree roots known to the natives but the exact nature of
which we unfortunately could
not determine. It is well to
note, moreover, that most of
the natives use the stimulants as
medicaments as well as condi-
ments. They are used for in-
testinal pains, colic, and as
purgatives.

462 In all the tribes the prep-
252 aration of food and meals is ex-
clusively the task of women.
They always do it with great care
[142]

252 The kitchen, if it can be
called one, is always very sim-
ple. If the weather is good,
cooking is done in the open in
the middle of the village, in
front of the hut or behind it,



Fig. 81. Carrying Firewood.

462 and very often in the shade of the banana trees. If the weather is
313 rainy or cold, the women prepares the meals inside the hut. [Ed.,
a passage is omitted here.]

264
[415] spherical calotte, and also wooden plates. Sometimes also simple leaves are used as plates, unless the food is served in the cooking pots.

The whole meal is spread on the ground. [144]

The man squats on his mat and dips leisurely in the dishes with his hand, moving from one to another according to his taste.

[522] The meal is always eaten in silence. Even when several friends eat together, they never talk during the meal.

After the meal the natives carefully wash their hands and teeth and rinse out their mouths several times.

Beverages

271
415 Water is the only beverage they drink at mealtime, and they use it quite rarely. If they do not have a wooden or earthenware cup, they use part of a calabash or simply a leaf rolled into a little cone.



Fig. 83. Water Carrier.

312
462
857
482 Water usually comes from a spring near the village. The natives use river water only when it is quite clear. The women and children have the task of fetching water, a chore which is often quite hard. I visited many villages located along or near the river, whose source of drinking water was 20 to 30 minutes away.

At certain hours of the day and more especially in the morning as the sun first comes

up, the women and children set out, a calabash or water jug balanced on their heads, to fetch the supply for the day.

271
415 Water is kept in large calabashes or earthenware jugs, sheltered from the sun in a corner of the hut.

595^x She does not work in the farm or kitchen. She always has an ebisa to wait on her. If her family has no member they can let her have, she will borrow an ebisa from a distant relative or a friend.

● [412] A nkondé does not travel on foot; she is carried in a hammock (hunting net). Her husband accompanies her on foot, however. But [552] this was done only for a true nkondé of a rich man, and the custom is disappearing today.

A favorite may not leave her husband, even to go and see her parents. In the past some men were so jealous of their favorites [514] that they would not allow them to satisfy even their most private needs unless they themselves or some sentinel (usually a Botswana) stood watch. A man could not even go into the vicinity of her hut, which is built just behind the husband's shed. For although the husband is sometimes tolerant of the passions of his other wives, he always shows [152] an intransigent jealousy [346] in relation to his favorite. He never travels without having her accompany him.

The favorite has the honor of performing small personal services for her husband; she cuts his hair, helps him in the removal of [515] body hair, scratches his pustules from ringworm or prickly heat, anoints him with oil, paints him with ngola, and, in a word, performs all the tasks connected with his appearance and hygiene.

595^x
766 Out of love for his favorite, her husband can buy her corpse for the price of a slave (in kind or in money). By doing so he obtains the right to have it buried beside his own while those of the other wives must be buried with their native clans. That is why in some regions a husband calls his favorite his ikundaka (from kunda "to bury"). Nevertheless, if her husband dies before she does, his heirs may not trouble themselves about his wishes and no longer require that the favorite be buried in their cemetery. That is what happened to Bongôla of Bongili, whose husband Ikilinganya of Bongangâ (Boëndé) had paid the price of two slaves for this right. When the husband has [224] killed large game, the favorite, like the bomatsa, has the right to receive her personal predetermined portion (boando). Her part is the neck or a chop, which in her absence, goes to the sons or their wives. The other wives do not have the same right; each one obtains only an ordinary piece (londo).

764 for it was necessary first to celebrate the farewell feast, and the widower's family had to gather to discuss the matter and collect the valuables needed for the funeral payment (see the article which follows). Only after all that did the young men belonging to the husband's family take the mortal remains upon their shoulders -- wrapped in a mat or enclosed in a coffin, depending on the case.

[482] If possible all the husband's relatives take part in the procession. The pallbearers walk at the head. The men are armed with bows and arrows, knives and sticks, seldom with spears. The women accompany them [425], wailing. The husband and, if necessary, a few relatives carry with them the various objects they will need for the payments. Some men have a lotótsi (an [534]ocarina) (1) or an antelope horn on which they play intermittently. (2)

1. See my "Note sur les Instruments de Musique à l'Equateur (Note on Musical Instruments at the Equator)" in Congo, 1935, Vol. 2, July, p. 187, figs. 1 and 2 (p. 199).

2. Sometimes there is also an accompaniment of drums.

[201] At the time the corpse is lifted and while passing through villages between their own and their destination, the lokolé is struck with regular and equal blows (-kémya) to announce the arrival of the funeral procession.

584
764 The chief personage among those who follow the corpse is not the husband, but the ndonga. He may never be absent at that time. Even if the husband is deceased and the procession is that of a widow who has not remarried, the ndonga must always be in the party. The duty of bringing the corpse of a married woman is above all his.

The ndonga may go ahead of the procession to inform the family of the deceased of her death, and if there is a great distance between the wife's village and the husband's, he may not be able